

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-19

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 AID-20 EA-11 EUR-25

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SCI-06 AEC-11

OMB-01 DRC-01 /194 W

----- 123064

R 221005Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8410

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 2078

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MCAP, IN, NP

SUBJECT: INITIAL NEPALESE REACTION TO INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST

REF: STATE 104770

1. AT CONCLUSION OF MY CALL ON FONMIN KARKI MAY 21 ON OTHER MATTERS (SEPTELS), HE ASKED IF I HAD SEEN GON STATEMENT CONCERNING GOI NUCLEAR TEST AND ASKED WHAT U.S. REACTION TO TEST HAD BEEN. I DREW ON REFTEL.

2. FOREIGN MINISTRY'S STATEMENT REFERRED TO BY KARKI, ISSUED MAY 19, SAID THAT NEPAL, GUIDED BY SPIRIT OF THE NTB AND NPT TREATIES AND IN THE INTERESTS OF WORLD PEACE "HAS STRONGLY UPHELD THE PRINCIPLE IN FAVOR OF A TOTAL BAN ON THE TESTING AND
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PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR ARMS AND CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED ALL KINDS

OF NUCLEAR TESTS". THE STATEMENT ADDED THAT GON "HAS NO REASON TO DISBELIEVE" PRIMIN GANDHI'S STATEMENT THAT INDIA IS COMMITTED TO USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES. A LENGTHLY AND CONVOLUTED EDITORIAL IN THE SEMI-OFFICIAL RISING NEPAL MAY 21 WAS EQUIVOCAL, BUT GENERALLY SUPPORTED GOI POSITION ON TEST.

3. I FOUND KARKI HIMSELF MUCH MORE CONCERNED, EVEN SHAKEN, BY THIS DEVELOPMENT AND NOTABLY SKEPTICAL OF INDIAN ASSERTIONS THAT THEIR OBJECTIVE IS PEACEFUL USES ONLY. HE SAID IT WILL HAVE A "PROFOUND EFFECT" ON RELATIONSHIPS IN THE REGION, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO PAKISTAN. SPECULATING ON REASONS BEHIND TIMING, KARKI INDICATED HE SHARED "GENERAL VIEW" THAT INDIAN INTENTION WAS TO DEFLECT ATTENTION FROM GOI'S DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, BUT ADDED: "IT WILL NOT WORK; PEOPLE STILL NEED FOOD AND CLOTHING." HE QUESTIONED GOI PRIORITIES IN VIEW OF INDIAN DEVELOPMENT NEEDS. KARKI THOUGHT GOI HAD PROBABLY COORDINATED TIMING WITH USSR. HE THOUGHT CHINESE REACTION WOULD BE VERY DELIBERATELY WORKED OUT, BUT WOULD BE STRONG. NOW, HE SAID SADLY, SURROUNDED BY NUCLEAR POWERS, NEPAL HAS FALLEN FURTHER BEHIND IN A RELATIVE SENSE, AND HAS NO RECOURSE BUT TO CONTINUE ITS DRIVE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. NEPAL WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF THE NPT, HE SAID.

4. OTHER PRESS REACTION IN NEPAL HAS BEEN MIXED. ONE PRO-SOVIET ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY EDITORIALIZED "IT IS PATENTLY FALSE TO SAY THAT PEACE HAS BEEN THREATENED BY THIS TEST," WHILE AN INDEPENDENT DAILY FOUND IT "HARD TO BELIEVE THAT GOI CONDUCTED TEST FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES" AND "CLEAR THAT INDIA" HAS GONE ALL OUT TO

DEVELOP HER MILITARY CAPABILITIES."
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